



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

**2010 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL NO: HB 450
COMMITTEE: HGO
POSITION: SUPPORT**

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TITLE: Maryland Community Health Resources Commission - Health Care Reform - Safety Net Providers

BILL ANALYSIS:

This legislation authorizes the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) to provide technical assistance to safety net providers by examining issues and potential challenges to safety net providers in implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene supports HB 450, Maryland Community Health Resources Commission - Health Care Reform - Safety Net Providers. Under the auspices of the Health Care Reform Coordinating Council (HCRCC) established by Governor O'Malley in the immediate aftermath of Congress' enactment of the ACA, the State has spent the last ten months creating the blueprint for a well-planned and inclusive implementation of health care reform.¹ This blueprint included the following recommendation:

Recommendation Five: Encourage active participation of safety net providers in health reform and new insurance options.

Even with the ACA's substantial coverage expansion, an estimated 400,000 or more Marylanders will remain uninsured. Given the ongoing need for their services, the HCRCC recommended that Maryland provide technical assistance to safety net providers to help them prepare for changes brought about by reform. This effort should assess the administrative infrastructure of small safety

¹ The Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council's Final Report was submitted to the Governor in January 2011 is available at www.healthreform.maryland.gov

net providers, identify partnering opportunities among providers, and develop a roadmap for the sustainability of these efforts.

The Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) is capable and well positioned to provide this assistance. The CHRC will assess the administrative infrastructure of small safety net providers, identify opportunities to partner to more efficiently support these activities, and develop a business plan for the sustainability of these efforts.

This is an important step to ensure the State is positioned to comply with the requirements of the ACA and take full advantage of the opportunities to lower costs, expand coverage, and improve health services. The Department urges a favorable report.

(February 17, 2011)